

[The Origin and History of the Bible]

Lecture V: Amos and the Prophets

Earl C. Davis

1. A. Historical Background

Allowing for some kernel of historic fact in the tradition of the Jewish people, we are to believe that they were one of the nomadic tribes living in Asia Minor, moving from place to place as inclination or need of food demanded. That they may have spent a time in Canaan before a portion of them wandered off into Egyptian territory is suggested by the patriarchal stories. But of all that early history there is not one trace of absolute historic fact. But all that is necessary for our purposes is to know that Palestine, or Canaan, was under Babylonian rule between 2000 and 1500 B.C. From 1400 on to 1300 under nominal Egyptian rule.

In 1300 B.C. those tribes to whom the tradition of an Egyptian captivity belonged, appeared in the neighborhood of Palestine. By 1270 [B.C.E.] a tribe called Israel is settled in Canaan.

- 1030 [B.C.E.] Saul establishes the Benjamite kingdom.
- 1010 David's coronation at Hebron.
- 963 The dedication of the Temple.
- 750 Amos.
- 640 Josiah.
- 586 Fall of Jerusalem. Many Jews carried into exile in Babylon
- 539 Babylon was captured by Cyrus the Persian.
- 536 Return of the Jews from Babylon under Zerubbabel.
- 516 Dedication of the second temple. Followed by the mission of Nehemiah and the completion of the priestly code in 444 or 385.

In the old Hebrew Bible, the books of our Bible are divided into three great sections, The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law, or Torah, was the Pentateuch with which we were dealing last Sunday night. We saw how that grew from very primitive beginnings, and through a period of perhaps a thousand years evolved from spoken tradition to authoritative scripture.

Tonight, we pass to a consideration of that class of books in the Bible known as the prophets. These historical books which

were known as the "Former Prophets," Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, were included in this group, but we shall not have much to do with them. Our concern will be chiefly with the prophets proper, known as the "Later Prophets." In the Hebrew Bible the order and the arrangement differs very significantly from the Christian Bible. In the Hebrew Bible the Prophets come immediately after the Pentateuch, holding the second place in the threefold Canon, Law/Prophets/Writings. The Book of Daniel is not included among the Prophets but finds its place among the miscellaneous books known as "Writings."

In the Hebrew Bible, moreover, we have the three Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and one book of minor prophets, known as the "Book of the Twelve." Only in the Latin Church and those influenced by it were these designated as the "minor prophets" and divided up into twelve books. They were called the "Minor Prophets" "on account of their brevity as compared with those who are called the Major Prophets because of their ampler volumes." See Augustine, in *De Civ. Dei* XVIII, 29, cited in Smith Page 4.¹

Prophets. 8 Books in All

	Place in Hebrew Bible Following the Pentateuch
Former Prophets	
Joshua	
Judges	
Samuel (one book)	
Kings (one book)	
The Latter Prophets	
Isaiah	
Jeremiah	
Ezekiel	
"The Twelve," One book of 12 minor prophets	

This group of writings cover a period from about 750 B.C. to about 300 B.C. Amos is acknowledged to be the oldest of the Prophets. Likewise, it is one of the best. It ushers in a new era in the development of Jewish literature, and lifts the whole idea of prophecy from a crude and primitive conception of foretelling to that of an ethical analysis and judgement upon

¹ George Adam Smith (1856-1942) Scottish theologian, author of *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, in *The Expositor's Bible*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896. This quote of Augustine in translation, with reference, as provided by Davis, is on page 4.

current history. This great Prophetic Movement continues through five hundred years, coming to its height in so-called second Isaiah, and then it dwindles out into mere apocalyptic literature of the Apocrypha.

2. B. First-Hand Documents

In these prophetic writings, or collections of Prophetic writings, we have the earliest first-hand or contemporary historical documents. In the prophecy of Amos we have the earliest contemporaneous document in the Bible. To be sure the Pentateuch and the historical books treat of periods in Jewish history prior to the time of Amos, but in the form in which we have them, they were written at a date later than Amos, or in the case of J and E, while written before Amos, they treat of events and incidents prior to the date of writing. While J, the oldest document, was put into written form in about 850 B.C. It does not pretend to treat of any alleged events later than the Judges.² But Amos was written in about 750 B.C. and deals with events and conditions of the time in which it was written. So, in Amos we have a substantial historical document, the oldest of the Bible. Each of the prophetic books reflects, and deals with the times in which it was written.

A study of the chart³ will bring out two or three general points that are important.

The first point is that according to this arrangement the order in which the Books of the bible are arranged varies according to various periods, and for various reasons. The order of the Three Major Prophets varies, some arrangements placing Isaiah first, some second and others last. The place of the Minor prophets, and their arrangement as regards each other varies.

Second, the arrangement on the chart is according to the probably date of composition. In this arrangement it is to be noted that Isaiah is broken up into four documents, and that each of these documents has its own historical setting, and a setting which precludes the possibility of unitary authorship.

² Judges concerns the period from after the death of Joshua, c. 1600 B.C.E., until Saul was crowned king of Isreal in 1051 B.C.E.

³ It is not clear what chart Davis refers to. It could be the table with the heading "Prophets. 8 Books in All." If not this, then "the chart" has been lost.

Isaiah 1-39 is dated about 740 [B.C.E.].

Isaiah 40-55 is dated about 550 [B.C.E.].

Isaiah 56-66 is dated about 432 [B.C.E.].

A portion of first Isaiah 24-27 is placed in the neighborhood of 340 [B.C.E.]. Zechariah is also divided into two portions:

Zechariah 1-8 is dated 520 [B.C.E.], while...

Zechariah 9-14 is placed about 330 [B.C.E.].

The Book of Daniel is omitted entirely from the old texts. Not only is there no trace of the existence of the Book of Daniel before the year 168 B.C. but in the Hebrew Canon it is placed not among the prophets, but among the Hagiographa. Either the Hebrews did not regard the book as prophetic, or it was written too late to be included in the group of writings, and simply found a place among the "Other Writings."

3. C. Amos

As I have said before, in the rise of the line of prophets we are entering upon a new development in Israel.

Amos is the oldest of the prophets, and we will use the prophecies of Amos to bring out the important aspects of this period, and the prophetic movement which he introduces.

Israel was at the height of its glory under Solomon, but even in the days of Solomon there was revolt as the stories in Kings indicate. After the death of Solomon, the division came into Israel and Judah, the Northern and the Southern kingdoms. Israel was thus divided at the time when our Prophet Amos comes upon the stage of Palestinian life.

In 783 [B.C.E.] Jeroboam II became ruler over Israel. He was still king of Israel when Amos first prophecies.

CHAPTER 1.

1 Amos sheweth God's judgment upon Syria, 6 upon the Philistines, 9 upon Tyrus, 11 upon Edom, 13 upon Ammon.

THE words of A'mos, who was among the herdmen¹⁰ of Te-kō'a, which he saw concerning Is'ra-el in the days¹⁰ of Uz-zī'ah king of Jū'dah, and in the days of Jēr-o-bō'am the son of Jō'ash king of Is'ra-el, two years before the¹¹ earthquake.

2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zī'on, and utter his voice from Je-ru'sa-lēm; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Cār'mel shall wither.

In order to see more clearly what kind of a prophet Amos was, and just what his prophecies indicated, it is necessary to recall the historical setting. Bennet and Adney:

Under Uzziah and Jeroboam Judah and still more Israel enjoyed a great revival of power and prosperity, which, however, as we learn from the prophetic books, was accompanied by social corruption and the oppression of the poor and the helpless. The formation of great estates resulted in the growth of a landless, pauper class. Yet the worship of Jehovah was carried on with great splendor and assiduous devotion at many sanctuaries, and Jeroboam had been encouraged in his successful wars by Jonah ben Amittai, whom Kings recognize as a true prophet." 241.⁴

2 Kings 14, 27 -- 29

23 In the fifteenth year of Ām-a-zī'ah² the son of Jō'āsh king of Jū'dah, Jēr-o-bō'am the son of Jō'āsh king of Īs'ra-el began to reign in Sa-mā'ri-a, and reigned forty and one years.

24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins³ of Jēr-o-bō'am the son of Nē'bāt, who made Īs'ra-el to sin.

25 He restored the coast of Īs'ra-el from the entering of Hā'math⁴ unto the sea⁵ of the plain, according to the

word of the LORD God of Īs'ra-el, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jō'nah,⁶ the son of A-mīt'tāi, the prophet, which was of Gāth-hē'pher.

26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Īs'ra-el, that it was very bitter: for⁷ there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Īs'ra-el.

27 And the LORD said not⁸ that he would blot out the name of Īs'ra-el from under heaven: ⁹but he saved them by the hand of Jēr-o-bō'am the son of Jō'āsh

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jēr-o-bō'am, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Da-mās'cus, and Hā'math, which belonged¹⁰ to Jū'dah, for Īs'ra-el, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Īs'ra-el?

29 And Jēr-o-bō'am slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Īs'ra-el; and Zāch-a-rī'ah his son reigned¹¹ in his stead.

But I want to expand this idea for it throws so much light upon the true character and function of the Jewish prophet in general, and Amos in particular.

King Joash, whose arms the dying Elisha had blessed, won back in the sixteen years of his reign (798-783 [B.C.E.]) the cities which the Syrians had taken from his father (2 Kings 13, 23-5). His successor, Jeroboam II, came in, therefore, with a flowing tide. He was a strong man, and he took advantage of it. During his long reign of about forty years (783-743 [B.C.E.]) he restored the border of Israel from the Pass of Hammath between the Lebanons to the Dead Sea, and occupied at least part of the territory of Damascus (2 Kings 14:28 if not Damascus itself). This means that the constant raids to which Israel had been subjected now ceased, and that by the time of Amos, about 755 [B.C.E.], a generation was grown

⁴ W.H. Bennett (1855-1920) and Walter F. Adeney (1849-1920), *A Biblical Introduction*, New York: Thomas Whittaker Inc., 1899, p. 241.

up who had not known defeat, and the most of whom had perhaps no experience in war.

Along the same length of years Uzziah (c.778-740 [B.C.E.]) had dealt similarly with Judah (2 Kings 15; cf. Chronicles 26). He had pushed south to the Red Sea, while Jeroboam pushed north to Hamath; and while Jeroboam had taken the Syrian towns he had crushed the Philistine. He had reorganized the army, and invented new engines of siege for casting stones. On such of his frontiers as were opposed to the desert he had built towers: there is no better means of keeping the nomads in subjection.

All this meant such security across broad Israel as had not been known since the glorious days of Solomon. Agriculture must everywhere have revived: Uzziah the Chronicler tells us, *loved husbandry*. But we hear most of Trade and Building. With quarters in Damascus and a port on the Red Sea, with allies in the Phoenician towns and tributaries in the Philistine, with the command of all the main routes between Egypt and the North as between the Desert and the Levant, Israel, during those forty years of Jeroboam and Uzziah, must have been a busy and wealthy commercial power.

Smith Geo. A L2 prophets. 32.⁵

Thus, we see that at the time when Amos was prophesying, Israel and Judah both were enjoying a period of peace and prosperity not before known in its history, except perhaps under Solomon. Great building was going on. Great houses were built for the wealthy people, one house for winter and another for summer. The furnishings were very luxurious. "In short," says Professor Smith,

in the half-century between Elisha and Amos, Israel rose from one to another of the great stages of culture. Till the eighth century they had been but a kingdom of fighting husbandmen. Under Jeroboam and Uzziah city life was developed, and civilization, in the proper sense of the word, appeared.

Page 34.⁶

⁵ George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, in *The Expositor's Bible*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896, pp. 32-33.

⁶ George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, in *The Expositor's Bible*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896, p. 34.

This too was a very religious age in the conventional sense. The sanctuaries were flourishing. Yahweh was the great god of Israel. Tithes were paid to him generously, and more frequently than the letter of the Law demanded. "Sabbath and New Moon as days of worship and rest from business were observed"⁷ scrupulously, as well as the prescribed festivals, and pilgrimages to the shrines.

Such was the time when Amos prophesied. The first appearance is described in [Amos] 7:10-17.

Imagine the presumption of this unknown herdsman from the country coming up to the city, to the very festival of religion at the shrine of Bethel, when Israel was enjoying the most prosperous, the most charitable, the most highly religious period in its history, and telling Israel that Yahweh is displeased.

Amos VII ,6ff.

6 beseech thee; by whom shall Jā'cob arise? for he is small.
6 The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.
7 Thus he shewed me; and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand.
8 And the LORD said unto me, A'mos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a "plumbline in the midst of my people Is'ra-el: I will not again pass by them" any more.
9 And the high places^{as} of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Is'ra-el shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jēr-o-bō'am with the sword.¹
10 Then Am-a-zī'ah, the ²priest of Bēth-el, sent to Jēr-o-bō'am² king of Is'ra-el, saying, A'mos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Is'ra-el; the land is not able to bear all his words.
11 For thus A'mos saith, Jēr-o-bō'am shall die by the sword, and Is'ra-el shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.
12 Also Am-a-zī'ah said unto A'mos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Jū'dah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:
13 But prophesy not again any more at Bēth-el; for⁴ it is the king's chapel, and it is the ³king's court.
14 Then answered A'mos, and said to Am-a-zī'ah, I ⁵was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman,⁶ and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.
15 And the LORD took me ⁶as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Is'ra-el.
16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: Thou sayest, Prophesy not⁷ against Is'ra-el, and drop⁸ not *thy word* against the house of Is'ra-el.
17 Therefore⁹ thus saith the LORD: Thy wife shall be an harlot⁹ in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Is'ra-el shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

⁷ George Adam Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, Amos, Hosea, and Micah*, in *The Expositor's Bible*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896, p. 39.

The implication of Amaziah, the Priest of Bethel, that Amos was just [a] hireling prophet, such as were common those days, and Amos' scathing denial of any such imputation, are among the most illuminating incidents of the book.

Says Amaziah to Amos, "O thou Seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's Chapel (RV sanctuary), and it is the king's Court (RV Royal House)."

Amos replies with hot indignation, "I am no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:

And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, 'Go Prophesy unto my people Israel.'"⁸

Amos is not one of the line of prophets who foretold events for a price, to suit the purchaser, but he saw, as perhaps the basket of summer fruit symbolized, that while Israel might be prosperous, powerful, and religious in its outward manifestations, it was rapidly decaying beneath the skin. Disease was at work. Let a few verses be called to illustrate this.

called to illustrate this .

<p>Amos 2 6 Thus saith the LORD, For three transgressions of Is'ra-el, and for four, I will not turn away the <i>punishment</i> thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;</p>	<p>Amos 5 10 They hate^e him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 6. <small>1 The wantonness of Israel, 7 shall be plagued with desolation, 12 and their incorrigibleness.</small></p> <p>WOE to them <i>that are</i> ^{at ease} in Zi'on, and trust in the mountain of Sa-mā'ri-a, <i>which are</i> named ^{chief} of the nations, to whom the house of Is'ra-el came!</p> <p>2 Pass ye unto Cāl'neh,⁴ and see; and from thence go ye to Hā'math the great: then go down to Gāth of the Phi-lis'tines: <i>be they</i> better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?</p> <p>3 Ye that put far away⁵ the evil day, and cause the ^{seat of violence} to come near;</p> <p>4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch² themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;</p> <p>5 That ^{chant to the sound of the} viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like Dā'vid;⁷</p> <p>6 That drink ^{wine in bowls,} and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the ^{affliction of} Jō'seph.⁸</p>
<p>7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek; and a man and his father will go in unto the <i>same</i> ^{maid,} to profane⁶ my holy name:</p> <p>8 And¹ they lay <i>themselves</i> down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of ^{the condemned} in the house of their god.</p>	<p>11 Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading <i>is</i> upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted ^{pleasant} vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.</p> <p>12 For I know⁹ your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just,² they take a ^{bribe,} and they turn aside the poor in the gate <i>from their right.</i></p>	

⁸ Amos 7:12-15.

Not even the religious ceremonies, so precious in the sight of the prosperous ease-loving cult, does this Amos spare:

Amos V

19 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22 Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

24 But⁹ let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

"But let justice run on as waters, and righteousness as a perennial stream."⁹

And here enters a new idea into Israelitish thought. All these threats which Amos pours out upon the astonished and bruised Israel are to be accomplished by the dreaded Syrians, the very same who had made Israel pay tribute, and devastated her cities. Up to this time, it was held the Yahweh was the God of Israel, and of no other people. But in Amos we get a glimmering of that monotheistic idea. Yahweh judges, the transgressions of Damascus, Gaza, Tyra, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Israel.

Amos was a man of sense. He saw that not all their wealth, or their vaunted power, or their pious ceremonies could forestall the pressure of invasion. He viewed the situation from the point of view of a great ethical statesman.

The doom which Amos sees impending over Israel is visited upon it in retribution for the wrongs which men inflict upon their fellows, the oppression of the poor by the rich, the small man by the great; the injustice, often in the forms of law, by which men are deprived of property and liberty; the luxury, aping foreign modes, which is not only corrupting in itself, but is the chief motive of injustice and oppression and fraud. The very prosperity of the nation was its ruin.

With all this Israel is very religious; it acknowledges the success in war and the profit of commerce as the gift of the national God and evidence of his favor, and does not grudge him his share even of ill-

⁹ Amos 5:24.

gotten gains. Amos' God has a conscience—that was a new idea about gods!—and abhors such religion. He hates their festivals, refuses their sacrifices, spurns their hymns of praise, "But let justice roll on down like floods, and right like an unfailing stream." That is the only worship he owns.

This standard of right is not one thing in Israel and another among the heathen: Amos summons the Philistines and the Egyptians to behold with amazement and horror the doings in Samaria. ... The God of Amos is the apotheosis of right, the conscience of the world that can neither be corrupted nor sophisticated; ...

Moore 196; Moore 197.¹⁰

In Amos we have a new development in the religious and ethical thought of Israel. This is the significance of the prophets. Their significance does not arise from the fact that they predicted certain things would happen, but from the fact that like Amos they saw more clearly than their fellows the operation of the great universal laws of life and society. Amos did not know any more than the priest Amaziah what events were going to happen, but he did see that a nation, even though prosperous, benevolent, and religious in ceremonies, is on the way to rapid decay when extreme wealth and extreme poverty, luxury and misery, live side by side within its borders. He saw that however strong might be the army, and however powerful might be the towers of defense on the border, such a nation was bound to rapid decay, like the basket of ripe summer fruit. No power, no force under heaven, but the power of justice could forestall the approaching calamity.

God's Control of Foreign Nations.

Perhaps it is not entirely out of place to step aside from the subject to say that the observations of Amos concerning Israel and its safety in the eighth century B.C. are as valid for the United States in the 20th century A.D. as they were for Israel. Our dangers are not foreign foes, but domestic enemies that violate the laws of justice.

¹⁰ George Foot Moore (1851-1931) eminent historian of religion, Presbyterian minister. This quote from his *The Literature of the Old Testament*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1913, pp. 196-7.

4. D. Hosea

The prophet Hosea as well as Isaiah lived during this same period. His prophecies are usually dated about 743 [B.C.E.]. He is one of the greatest men of the O.T. From him as the first expounder in Jewish literature there develops a line of thought that is probably the greatest in human experience. Amos placed his emphasis upon Justice. Amos' God was the personification of justice. Hosea placed his emphasis upon Love. The opening chapters illustrate what he means by this idea. These chapters are said to record the personal experience of Hosea. He married a woman whom he loved. She proved to be an adulteress. She left him for other men. Finally, she became a bond servant; Hosea goes to her, and buys her from her bondage, and brings her back to his house, and by his big generous devotion seeks to stir in life the smoldering embers of former love for him. This is Hosea's idea of Israel's God. A loving God. This idea for the first time appearing in Hosea will be found again as the basis of so-called Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy, as well as the theme of the Deuteronomic school.

This concerning Hosea ...¹¹

5. E. Isaiah

Isaiah is the next of the Prophets chronologically considered. But it is necessary first to speak of the Book of Isaiah rather than of the person, for it has long since been guessed, and has now been established beyond reasonable question, that the Book of Isaiah contains a collection of prophecies by different authors. The first of the collection dates about 743 B.C. The latest dates about 330 B.C.

Analysis. The Book of Isaiah is divided as follows:

First Isaiah

Chapters 1-9:9	Judah, Ephraim, Suria and Assyria
Chapters 9:10-14:23	First group of later additions
Chapters 14:24-23	Oracles on the Nations
Chapters 24-27	Second group of later additions
Chapters 28-32	Chastisement by and deliverance from Assyria
Chapters 33-35	Third group of later additions
Chapters 36-39	Historical appendix

¹¹ Here the sentence and the section on Hosea ends incomplete.

Second Isaiah

Chapters 40-55

Deutero-Isaiah. Exilic with servant passages

Chapters 56-66

"Trito Isaiah" Collection of post-exilic prophecies

As indicated above the main portions of Chapters 1-39 are the work of Isaiah proper.

Isaiah ministered at Jerusalem, of which he was probably a native. He was married, and two sons were born to him during his ministry. He ministered for more than forty years, from his call in the year when King Uzziah died, c. 740 [B.C.E.] till after the retreat of Sennacherib in 701 [B.C.E.], so that he was born under Uzziah, began his ministry as a young man, and continued it to old age. The story of his martyrdom under Manasseh cannot be traced beyond the second century A.D. Like Elisha and Jeremiah, he sought to control the home and foreign policy of the government; during part of Hezekiah's reign he was the chief power of the state, and probably Hezekiah's reformation was inspired by him. He protested steadily, but without effect, against foreign alliances, whether with Assyria against Syria and Israel, or with Egypt against Assyria. Like Amos, Hosea, and Micha he denounced the faith in assiduous and often superstitious and even idolatrous worship as a substitute for a moral life and righteous government, and foretold the ruin of Israel and the chastisement of Judah, but a righteous remnant of latter should be saved. ... Isaiah followed Amos in recognizing God's control of foreign nations as well as his special interest in Israel, one application being that Assyria was the rod used by God to chastise his people, and that Assyria's delusion that it conquered by its own power would be severely chastised.

Isaiah goes far toward a formal statement of monotheism; ...

B&A. 173.¹²

¹² W.H. Bennett (1855-1920) and Walter F. Adeney (1849-1920), *A Biblical Introduction*, New York: Thomas Whittaker Inc., 1899, pp. 172-173. Note: In Davis' manuscript the passage "Isaiah goes far toward a formal statement of monotheism;" is inserted out of order in the ellipsis between in the first paragraph (between "should be saved" and "Isaiah followed Amos"). Note also that Davis' analysis of the chapters of Isaiah preceding this long quote is itself taken verbatim from Bennett and Adeney, p. 172.

6. F. Concerning the Analysis of the Parts of Isaiah

Up to this point we have been dealing with the first section of Isaiah, chapters 1-39. You are wondering what reasons there are for thus dividing the Book of Isaiah into sections. We will not consider the minor divisions, but simply the division into two sections to illustrate the necessity of thus breaking up the book into two sections.

First, chapters 36 to 39 are an historical review of Isaiah's efforts as related to the historical events of his times. This section ends as follows, "Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, 'Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken.' He said moreover for there shall be peace and truth in my days."¹³ In other words, this ends the prophecies of Isaiah.

Second. In these first chapters, 1-39, Isaiah is constantly spoken of and referred to as the author of various prophecies. In the second section his name is not mentioned from beginning to end.

Third. The language, style, and ideas are different as may be clearly seen from reading the two in the translation.

Fourth. The historical setting is entirely different. Assyria is no longer the menace as in first Isaiah. Nor is Babylon so much a menace as an accomplished mistress of Israel's destinies. Chapter 47, for example, illustrates the point. Here the prophet foretells God's Judgement upon Babylon, points out the futility of her self-confidence, for he declares in chapter 45 that Yahweh has already commissioned Cyrus, the Persian, to deliver the exiles from the hands of the Babylonians.

Briefly here is the historical connection. Amos in 750 [B.C.E.] was living in times of great power and prosperity. Isaiah passed through a stormy period in history. He saw Judah invaded by the Assyrians in three distinct invasions. He witnessed the deportation of the inhabitants from many sections of Israel. [He] saw Israel forced to pay tribute to the Assyrians.

Then followed a century of still further hardships, and in 597 [B.C.E.] came the first great deportation of Judahites to Babylonia, to be exiles in the city of the new power that had

¹³ Isaiah 39:8.

risen upon the crumbling masses of Assyria. Zedekiah was king in Judah after the deportation of 597 [B.C.E.]. He was not a submissive vassal of Babylon and led a revolt which resulted in the city of Jerusalem being taken, the Temple burnt, and a second deportation of exiles to Babylon.

The prophet of this second portion of Isaiah writes as one who knows all these events, and some of them are referred to.

In chapter 45 he speaks of Cyrus as the anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ whom God has selected to accomplish the deliverance of Israel from Babylon. This Cyrus did not become a power until shortly before 550 [B.C.E.] when he organizes the tribes of Persian origin and sweeps all before him. In 538 [B.C.E.] he attacks Babylon, captures it and the next year some of the exiled Jews return to Jerusalem. This second prophecy opens somewhere between 549 and 538 B.C.

The continuous theme of this entire section is Israel's restoration from exile in Babylon.

In this section of the Book there appears for the first time that wonderful conception, or the idea, that lifts that portion of the Bible to one of the high peaks in human thought. Not only is Yahweh a God of Justice, as Amos pictures him, and a God whose dominion extends over other nations than Israel; not only is he a God of Love, as Hosea pictures him, longing and working to redeem a nation from bondage; but also he is a God who is dependent upon man, and comrade of man, asking of man that he shall work and suffer that the great ends of justice, and love and mercy shall be accomplished. This is Israel's mission. Thus, is her exile explained. She shall suffer for the nations. Through her suffering they [will] be healed. The conception is pictured in the great servant passages.

13 ¶ Behold, ^a my servant shall ^b deal prudently, ^c he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his ^a visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 ^a So shall he sprinkle many nations; ^b the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* ^c which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

CHAPTER 53.

1 The prophet, complaining of incredulity, excommeneth the scandal of the cross, 4 by the benefit of his passion, 19 and the good success thereof.

WHO hath believed our ^areport? and to whom¹ is the arm¹ of the LORD revealed?²

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root³ out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and ^arejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and ^bwe hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* ^awounded for our transgressions, he *was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace⁶ *was* upon him; and with his ^bstripes⁶ we are healed.

6 All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath ^alaid on him the iniquity of us⁷ all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He⁸ *was* taken ^afrom prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people *was* ^bhe stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich⁹ in his ^adeath; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: ^awhen thou shalt make his soul an¹⁰ offering for sin, he¹¹ shall see *his* seed, he¹² shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure¹³ of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the¹⁴ travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his¹⁵ knowledge shall my righteous¹⁶ servant¹⁷ justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him *a*

*portion*¹⁸ with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession¹⁹ for the transgressors.

7. G. Prophecy and Foretelling [of the Coming of Jesus]

The other major prophets will be considered in the lecture next Sunday night, on the finding the law in the Temple. I want now to take up a question that has doubtless been in your minds all the evening, namely the question of the relation of these prophecies to the events of the New Testament. I am not going to argue over that question. There are three views.

First. Based upon what I have already considered, the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. This view holds that everything in the Old Testament was written for the purpose of preparing for, announcing, and making clear the revelation of Christ, his coming, life passion and mission. There are a few people that still hold to this idea. God is the author and guarantor of these prophecies.

Second, there is the middle of the road view, that while the Old Testament does not specifically predict events, it fore-shadows them in general, and in a certain sense it is proper to assume that the Old Testament is a constant prophecy of Christ.

Third. There is the modern idea, which I may state that I hold, that the writers of the Old Testament had no more idea of the coming of Christ, or the significance of his life, than I have of the coming of the President of some republic in the year 2016. I believe that probably some country will have a ruler, or a chosen servant to perform the general executive functions. I believe that such a president, ruler, or whatnot, will know more, be more just, more human, than the average public servant today. Quite likely, should there be an especially strong and powerful, just and humane president appear that time, and should men look back into the literature of the generation that is now living, they would pick passages here and there from our attempts to describe a better state of society, and would say this president is just the sort of a man that we were looking for a hundred years ago. Well do the words written by Edward Everett Hale in the year 1890 describe this new man that has come into office in our midst, or is preaching in our midst?

That, too, touches the deeper meaning and aspect of the idea of prophecy. The forward looking, the attempt to interpret the present, and push back the veil of the future grows out of our present limitations, and needs. But the recognition of those needs is a force that tends to satisfy. The force that tends to satisfy is the fulfilling power of the longings of the prophet. The prophet is always characterized by one quality, dissatisfaction with things as they are. The things as they are, are measured by the thing as they ought to be. It is a natural force in evolution.

So much for the three points of view. I am not going to discuss the merits of these various aspects but will take up a few of the most important prophetic utterances that are held to predict the coming of Christ, and state what modern scholars say concerning them.

This passage is a messianic passage. At least verse 6 is such. Read the passage. It is dealing with existing conditions in Israel. Relief is expected. There shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. Israel had just been devastated by Assyrians. But peace is coming. Perhaps reference is made to the birth of a son to King Jehoiakim, or some other contemporary event. Verse seven indicates the character of the reign of this prince of

peace upon the thrown of David. Only by getting a hidden meaning can the passage bear upon Christ. For those who believe in such meanings, what the critic says has no bearing.

CHAPTER 9.

¹ *What joy shall be in the midst of afflictions, by the triumph and birth of Christ.* ² *The judgments upon Israel for their pride, 12 for their opposition, 13 and for their impiety.*

NEVERTHELESS, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zēb'u-lūn and the land of Nāph'ta-lī,⁴ and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jōr'dan, in Gāl'i-lee⁵ of the nations.

2 The people⁶ that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day⁷ of Mīd'i-an.

5 For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government⁸ shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,⁹ The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of Dā'vid, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah VII 10-17

10 Moreover, the Lord spake again unto A'hāz, saying,

11 Ask thee a sign¹⁰ of the Lord thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

12 But A'hāz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.

13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of Dā'vid; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Im-mān'u-el.

15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16 For before the child¹¹ shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

17 The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that E'phra-īm departed from Jū'dah; even the king of As-sū'r'i-a:

Jehovah is having a conversation with Ahaz to convince him of the significance of the revolutions that are disturbing his reign. Of what value to this end would be the birth of Christ six hundred years later?

In all the passages in Isaiah 40-55, the looked-for savior that is to bring relief to the suffering Hebrew exiles is Cyrus, the Persian king. He is the deliverer.

Isaiah 44:28 makes Yahweh say of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, she shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."

Chapter 45 says, "Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, etc."

"To his Anointed," in the Septuagint we have the words, "To Kristo mou." And in the vulgate, "Christo Meo." In other words, the very same language that is used to describe Christ. It would be proper to translate the passage, "To my Christ, Cyrus," or "To my Messiah, Cyrus."

The writer [of] this whole passage betrays not the slightest suggestion that he was even thinking of any other matter in the world than that the liberation of the Exiles from Babylon at the hands of this Cyrus, the Anointed of Yahweh.

On the relation of the Servant passages to the Christ (Ch 48:20-49:4) says in so many words that the servant of Yahweh is Israel. "Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."¹⁴ The same may also be said of the famous servant passage in Chapters 52 and 53. Unless you take the passage out of the context and give it a meaning entirely different from the context, it is a passage in which Israel, as the suffering servant of Yahweh is extolled.

In general, the statement that the prophets had no idea of prophesying the events concerned with Christianity, that they were concerned with the problems of their own times, and the immediate future; that they had no miraculous or supernatural information; that they did not predict any future events; and, moreover, that God did not prophesy or predict future events through the prophets, is the negative conclusion of modern

¹⁴ Isaiah 49:3.

thought concerning this whole question of Old Testament predictions of New Testament events.

These prophecies were early competitors with the Torah for a place among the sacred writings of Israel.